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Local Knowledge of Art as a School Art Alternative

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Abstract

The disparities between what is learned about art in formalized school instruction and what constitutes an informal, local knowledge of art are suggested by the general population's apathy toward art education and contemporary fine art and by studies indicating that children engage in art production and appreciation very different from their formal school experiences in art. The purpose of this study is to explore differences between school and local art knowledge and to develop the theoretical rationale for art instruction that encompasses aspects of local art knowledge and experiences.

Local Knowledge of Art as a School Art Alternative

After a series of classroom lessons on linear perspective, a student is unable to render this type of perspective in drawings done in the natural environment. A graduate student prepares an exhibition of art work for review by her master's committee, but she does not include drawings that she works on during her spare time. A natural history museum exhibition of fishing equipment and related art forms draws record crowds of people from a wide range of occupational backgrounds; an exhibition of abstract art at an art museum is attended primarily by art professionals and students.

These familiar occurrences illustrate discrepancies among the knowledge, values, and attitudes in differing art contexts and a lack of transfer among those contexts. In this paper, art learning will be discussed in terms of differing art contexts which constitute constellations of specific types of art knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes. For example, there are various knowledge bases and assumptions from which classroom art instruction can proceed. In the history of art education, one can identify child psychology, the aesthetics of fine art culture, modern industrial principles, and formalistic art values as contributing toward some of our art education theories and practices (Logan, 1955). These and other constellations of meaning and value have constituted formalized, school art instruction.

School art is often discussed as differing from other subject areas in that studio art lessons involve the concrete manipulation of

materials and the direct experience of visual qualities. It seems that art instruction does not deal with abstract concepts and rules to the extent most school subjects do. In a relative sense, this might be so. However, when art contexts are compared, school art can be seen as rule-bound and as offering few occasions for transfer to the interactions of individuals in other art contexts. In this paper it will be proposed that a great deal of formal art instruction in grades K-12 may consist of highly specific, if not false, models of art learning that ill-prepare students for participation in professional art worlds or informal, local art experiences.

The disparities between what is learned about art in formalized school instruction and what constitutes an informal local knowledge of art are suggested by the general population's apathy toward art education and contemporary fine art (Chapman, 1982) and by studies indicating that children engage in art production and appreciation very different from their formal school experiences in art (Wilson, 1974, 1985; Wilson & Wilson, 1977). The purpose of this study is to explore differences between school and local art knowledge and to develop the theoretical rationale that aspects of local knowledge of art could serve as school art instructional alternatives.

To provide the rationale for rethinking school art practices in terms of differing art contexts, the following will be discussed: (1) assumptions of transfer in general education and art education, (2) (;KXK(U*X)+U)(+ H, +(;HHN KXUP NH(KN KXUP K:a WXH,*++)H:KN KXU (H:U*) , BbE IHa*N+ H,):+U)UeU)H:KN K:a):,HXIKN N*KX:):. (H:U*tU+P BgE X*+*KX(;

on local knowledge, and (5) areas of nontransfer between school art and local art.

Perspectives on Contexts of Knowledge

Knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, as they are appropriate to specific learning contexts, have been variously discussed as school culture, child culture, situational learning, situated knowledge, contextual knowledge, local knowledge, everyday knowledge, subcultures of learning, formal and informal learning, school domains, and so on. For research in general education, as reviewed by Perkins and Salomon (1989), context is most often limited to school domains or what is more commonly known as school subjects, wherein the concern is with the character of school instructional contexts and with whether there is any transfer among school domains. In particular, Perkins and Salomon (1989) explore the research and theoretical basis for teaching generalized cognitive skills as opposed to teaching domain-specific cognitive skills. The question of whether cognitive skills transfer to other contexts is limited to formal school learning contexts. For example, problem solving and analysis as general cognitive skills can be taught with the belief that they will be utilized in math, science, and other classes. Conversely, with reference to research findings, the case can be made that problem solving and analysis can differ in kind from one subject domain to another--and even differ within a domain. For example, after nonart majors had completed a series of successful drawings from live models, it was found that these students were unable

to incorporate learned drawing skills to other models and other drawing lessons (Wilson, 1974; Wilson & Wilson, 1977). This has lead Wilson to suggest that for students not talented in art there may be limited transfer even among highly similar activities within the school art curriculum and that students learn to draw particular subjects or objects rather than learn drawing skills per se.

Issues of transfer, domain-specific cognition, and general cognition have become embroiled in the wide-ranging and often media-oriented debate involving the merits of teaching cognitive processes as opposed to teaching the content of subject domains along with their domain-specific cognitive skills. Recently, colleges of education and programs for teacher preparation have come under attack for focusing on methods of teaching to the detriment of subject content (Holmes Group Executive Board, 1986). Proponents of cultural literacy identify the knowledge of Western traditions as constituting a particular, desired content for curricula (Bloom, 1987; Hirsch, 1987). As head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Cheney (1987) faulted education for teaching thinking skills without attention to information on literature, historic events, etc. Cheney suggested that teaching cognitive processes is specious unless there is substantive content about which to think. The back-to-basics thrust of current reform questions not only whether there is transfer across subject domains but even whether cognitive processes should be the core of emphasis in any subject domain.

Occasions for Transfer

In studio-based and child-centered art instruction, art educators

have been particularly fond of emphasizing the benefits of process over product and the many possibilities of cognitive and attitude transfer. Some art educators have claimed that art study involves the general thinking skills and behaviors of creativity, problem identification, problem solving, tolerance for conceptual ambiguity, etc., and that these will transfer and translate into an increase in mathematics test scores, a rise in reading levels, and a generalized creative attitude toward life (The Arts, Education and Americans Panel, 1977). Since the turn of the twentieth century, there have also been various claims that art instruction will result in moral behavior, psychological well-being, and life-enhancing insights unavailable from other types of study. Although such optimistic claims do not have a basis in research (Lanier, 1970, 1975), they do indicate that the issue of transfer goes well-beyond the school contexts that have been the usual concern in general education.

Transfer has been discussed in terms of specific skills, knowledge, strategies, attitudes, and values. Broudy (1982) studied the everyday uses of schooling in terms of replication (recall), association, application, and interpretation. Relevant to this paper, there are four occasions for transfer: (1) within a particular school domain, (2) among school domains, (3) between a school domain and everyday contexts in general, and (4) between a school domain and the local, everyday context of that domain.

Relatively little research has been devoted to how school-based

knowledge and skills translate into nonschool settings. Art education research has tended to focus on how school learning is preferable, with nonschool art knowledge and responses considered "unschooled," i.e., criteria for success is set up in terms of school art learning (Hardiman, 1971). In a tautology of school learning and school success, student assessments are based on how well students perform on tasks learned in school and utilized in the school context. Except for correlating occupational success with school learning, there is little follow-up research on how specific school-learned "items" are utilized outside the school context and, more specifically, how domain-specific learning, such as art, transfers to other art contexts. Some studies of everyday, out-of-school cognition suggest that not only is much learning and application context-specific but that transfer of some skills and knowledge from school: (1) does not occur or (2) is not considered useful for many of the events that occur in nonschool settings (Rogoff & Lave, 1984).

The concern in this paper is not with business and industry's complaints that schools should provide on-the-job training in both basic and job-specific skills. Such complaints are based more on seeing the schools as conduits for business and industry, and on students not learning basic reading, writing, and computational skills. Rather, the concern in this paper is that what <u>is learned</u> in formal institutions may not transfer to or have relevance in other domain-related contexts. Students entering professional art training are often asked to unlearn or ignore what they have acquired in their K-12 art training; art

students in K-12 art classes must often censor images from the popular arts and their adolescent fantasies (Michael, 1983; Smith, 1989; Wilson, 1974; Wilson & Wilson, 1977). In describing traditional studio-based art instruction, Efland (1976) has bluntly stated that such art "doesn't exist anywhere else except in schools" (p. 519).

Three Art Contexts

Ultimately, all of education is concerned with how well students will be able to apply what is learned in school to everyday living and to the skills required in particular professions or vocations. In this sense, there are three basic learning--and application of learning--settings: professional communities, school contexts, and the local context of everyday life experiences. The art that is made and/or responded to in these three contexts will be referred to in this paper as professional art, school art, and local art. Although reference will be made to disjunctures among all three contexts, the focus in this paper will be on differences between local art contexts and school art contexts.

Professional art contexts consist of galleries, museums, academic settings, and commercial art businesses in which socially designated art experts exercise the behaviors, skills, and attitudes of institutional art knowledge. School art is formalized art instruction that occurs in K-12 classrooms. The training of artists at professional art schools and at universities is not being included in this discussion; moreover, such formal learning contexts have more kinship with professional art

contexts than with the school art of grades K-12. Until recently, school art instruction has been primarily studio based, and, since the 1950s, the emphasis has been on individual expression and creativity, the learning of technical skills, and developing an understanding of art in terms of its materials and formal qualities. Local art is the art of everyday experiences, wherein art responses and production are learned through informal processes. Popular, commercial, environmental, etc., arts may be produced as part of professional contexts but experienced as local art. Domestic art, the hiddenstream art of the homeless, folk art, child art, and other types are created and may remain in the context of local, everyday experience.

The three art contexts identified in this paper have fluid boundaries and are themselves composed of many subcontexts (Becker, 1982). For example, local, everyday art consists of popular, commercial, folk, and environmental art as well as communal and individual expressions and responses to art. These cited art forms can also be found within professional contexts of experience, but they would probably be understood and responded to differently.

The term context as used in this paper is equivalent to culture inasmuch as contexts consist of value systems that support and perpetuate particular attitudes, behaviors, skills, and knowledge. Although schools and museums have physical locations and particular art forms characterize certain types of contexts, context is more rightly considered a constellation of values, attitudes, and knowledge that so-called "locate" particular types of experiences.

Context Models

Brown (1989), Feldman (1980), and Hall (1977) have developed theoretical models of how societies develop different learning contexts and how individuals create, experience, and give meaning to those contexts. Brown examines three cultures of learning which are highly similar to the three art contexts discussed in this paper. According to Brown, learning occurs in the cultures of students, of experts, and of "just plain folks" (JPF). Each of these learning cultures have different goals, focuses of action, cognitive processes, and so on. The culture of experts is goal focused, and action is based on (more-or-less) professionally agreed-upon values and assumptions. The culture of students is characterized by individual cognition, an emphasis on abstract thought, abstract symbol manipulation, explicit rules, and context-free abstractions and generalities. These are the learning characteristics of modern industrialized societies that are based on patriarchal, hierarchical systems of organization. In contrast, learning in the local contexts of "just plain folks" tends to be collaborative, involve the manipulation of concrete materials, and be experiential and situation-specific. These are the learning characteristics often attributed to nonindustrialized, traditional cultures based on matriarchal systems of organization.

Hall (1977) has, likewise, differentiated between the high context cultures of tradition and the low context cultures of modern Western society. In the former, the entire context of experience communicates

meanings on verbal and nonverbal levels, with recourse to a tacitly understood common history. For low context cultures, meaning is independent of context and resides in abstract thought processes made explicit in rules that can be applied irrespective of how situations might change.

Studies of how adolescent males and females make moral decisions illustrate dramatic differences between low context and high context assumptions and behaviors. Gilligan (1982) found that when presented with a moral dilemma, males often apply abstract rules that have been previously learned whereas females tend to base their decisions on the specifics of the dilemma and on how their decisions will influence the relationships of the people involved. Needless to say, it is low context values that find expression in the formal institutions of Western societies.

In much the way individuals learn varying forms of etiquette for different social settings, individuals experience and learn socially sanctioned forms of knowledge in different learning contexts--and responses vary accordingly. How a particular phenomenon, such as art, is experienced and understood in highly divergent but co-existing contexts is suggested by Feldman's (1980) developmental model of subject domains. According to Feldman, development does not occur within the cognition of the individual. Rather, development exists within how a particular domain is experienced in different contexts. Feldman proposes a continuum of five contexts for domain development: the universal, the cultural, the disciplinary, the idiosyncratic, and the

unique. These contexts extend from what is universally experienced by all human beings, such as the acquisition of language, to what is considered professionally unique, such as the creation of a new form of poetic verse.

Applied to art, Feldman's model accounts for the universal production of graphic symbols by children and for the universal presence of art throughout time and space. From the universal, art expression and response move to the learned experiences of art in cultural contexts. Everyday art experiences and visual forms of communication constitute particular, culturally sanctioned art. Specific study of art in the formal contexts of school results in understanding art as a discipline or body of knowledge and skills. The development of an individual artistic style is idiosyncratic to the discipline. Innovations which might change the discipline, and, perhaps, eventually everyday cultural experiences of art, are considered unique to the subject domain. For example, Picasso's work in the Cubist style would qualify as a unique contribution which had immeasurable impact on the idiosyncratic behaviors of other artists and on the disciplinary knowledge of art. To a great extent, however, Cubism remains alien to the everyday cultural experiences of most citizens. Proponents of a Western-based cultural literacy would move a disciplinary knowledge of art to the status of a cultural norm, so that, for example, Cubism and the rest of Picasso's work would be understood and appreciated as part of ongoing, broad-based cultural experiences.

Of course, not all citizens experience everyday culture in a similar manner. some individuals do have an everyday, cultural appreciation of Cubism. Educational background, personal interests, and class distinctions become evident in the distribution of different types of knowledge and different aesthetics. In this sense, each of Feldman's contexts is composed of subcontexts. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the manner in which art knowledge within and between contexts is given social legitimation as well as how it is often distributed along class lines. However, it may be significant that fine art traditions within the discipline of art are often considered essential to the education of gifted children and children in private schools. The preference given to professional art contexts, the more-or-less inconsequential outcomes of school art contexts, and the ignoring of local art contexts constitutes a continuum that ranges from social legitimation to benign neglect to delegitimation.

Feldman's five contexts indicate that a particular phenomenon, such as art, not only exists in different forms in a given society but that the context of experience is highly influential upon the way in which art is understood and given meaning. It is not being suggested that contexts are isolated from each other or that context <u>determines</u> experience. Except for the universal context identified by Feldman, learning contexts are humanly constructed, and, as such, they can be deconstructed.

Research on Local Cognition

Some studies suggest that types of learning are specific to their

context because differing contexts require different problem-solving strategies (Perkins & Salomon, 1989). School contexts provide the learning of specific rules, procedures, and deductive strategies. Lave, Murtaugh, and de la Rocha (1984) discuss learning strategies in terms of "closing the gap" between problem and solution. Applications within the school context or transfer of school learning to nonschool contexts involve the recognition of problems in relationship to similar, appropriate rule-bound strategies.

Ways in which mathematical portions are calculated in everyday contexts suggest that the formalized inversions and multiplications of fractions may be specific to school instruction. Local contexts allow for opportunistic solutions as indicated by the often-cited example of the person in a Weight Watchers Program who needed to calculate 3/4 of 2/3 cup of "real" cottage cheese. This individual merely patted 2/3 cup of cottage cheese into a circle, divided the circle into quarters and eliminated one of the quarters, thereby having 1/2 cup remaining (Lave, Murtaugh, & de La Rocha, 1984).

A study of grocery shopping strategies to calculate price comparisons suggested that ways to "close the gap" between problem and solution are specific to this everyday activity (Lave, Murtaugh, & de la Rocha, 1984). In selecting the least costly products during grocery shopping, mathematical computations were carried out with 98% accuracy. In similar school test examples, responses were 59% accurate. Accuracy in grocery shopping was unrelated to years of schooling, although

accuracy on the pencil-and-paper test was related to educational background.

School contexts provide the learning of rules and deductive strategies whereas everyday problem-solving is context-specific and opportunistic. According to Lave, Murtaugh, and de la Rocha (1984), problem solving in everyday, local contexts is practical and concrete, with efficiency the primary criterion for a selected strategy. Everyday instances of "closing the gap" between mathematical problems and solutions involve estimating, rounding numbers up or down, and using whatever conceptual or physical tools the context provides. Contextualized mnemonic devices and talking to one's self or fellow shoppers were strategies used by the grocery shoppers--strategies that would be inappropriate in school settings.

The above examples suggest that strategies to infer meaning or to solve problems can differ in nonschool and school contexts. Other studies suggest that learning remains specific to context because what is learned in one context is without meaning or application in another. It is not that what is learned in one context becomes nonsense in another, but rather that it may make "no-sense" to utilize it. One might suggest that many school art lessons, such as the construction of color wheels, value charts, dried-pea mosaics, and fish mobiles, have limited application to local experiences of art. This may, in part, be due to the limited school experience students have with particular art concepts, and a lack practice in making linkages to art content in other contexts. Current reform in art education focuses on between- and

within-grade sequential learning of art knowledge and techniques (Greer, 1984). However, this type of logical, internal linkage has resulted in textbook curricula that emphasize the formal qualities of art (Chapman, 1985) and that give limited options for exploring any one type of concept. Color wheels, for example, from grade 1 through grade 6--and often even on into graduate school--are presented in the triadic system without information indicating that this is but one way in which to study pigment mixing relationships (Burton, 1984). In this paper it is proposed that transfer between school art contexts and local art contexts may be limited due to each having differing problem-solving strategies as well as there being a lack of application of what is learned in each.

School Art Characteristics

Although there are in actuality many school art contexts and even more local art contexts, a number of researchers have noted some basic characteristics of each. According to Efland (1976), "school art is an institutional art style in its own right" (p. 519). It is conventional, ritualistic, and rule-governed. Media, themes and products are predictable; art products have a look that is recognizable and appropriate for bulletin board display and exhibition at parent night gatherings. The school art style is individualized, irregular, and visually pleasing; it involves "filling the space, using clean colors, spontaneous brush strokes, looseness as opposed to tightness" (Efland, 1976, p. 523). Such school art emanates from a child-centered philosophy of instruction wherein

individualism, creativity, and free expression are valued.

School art activities are no less predictable in the classroom in which technical skills and art content consisting of formal qualities are emphasized. Exercises dealing with color wheels, value charts, repeat designs, shading techniques, ways to show perspective, skill in various media techniques, etc., can result in technically impressive art products. Assumptions that the content of art resides in its material substance and formal qualities have a long and embedded history in formalist art theory and modernist values, and many recently published curricula are structured along formalist principles (Chapman, 1985). Although Bruner's (1960) idea that curriculum should be structured according to the activities of professionals has appeared in much art education literature, many art activities are idealizations that have little to do with how professionals work or how art is produced and appreciated in local contexts. Moreover, many experiences in the art classroom are a far cry from how professional artists organize their time, complete art work, and develop new ideas. In the art classroom, creativity must be expressed in 50 minute-a-day time increments (actually less than this considering "clean-up time"), noise must be kept to a minimum, work produced must not be messy, the clean-up of used materials must be accomplished in approximately 10 minutes, work spaces are depersonalized, and products must be produced that are capable of being easily stored.

Local Art Characteristics

Wilson (1974, 1985) has documented the themes and artistic

strategies of children drawing in nonschool settings. Sexual fantasies, scatological images, and cartoon figures are common in children's nonschool art. Duncum (1989) has also recorded the depiction of violence and "gross" subjects which, needless to say, are usually forbidden in school art contexts. Much school art is taught to overcome art learning from other contexts and, in particular, the local contexts of the popular culture and of personally based learning. In local contexts, children will draw on lined paper, scrap paper, their own bodies, and, of course, on walls and on the sides of buildings. They use ball-point pens, rulers, and erasers; they copy, trace, and use stencils. These are materials, tools, and techniques discouraged in school art.

Children readily copy from one another and from the imagery of the popular media. They incorporate, via copying or tracing, sophisticated artistic conventions that do not appear in their school art (Wilson, 1974; Wilson & Wilson, 1977). Many of the artistic conventions that are laboriously taught over time in the art curriculum appear spontaneously in students' nonschool drawings and may appear well-ahead of the expectations of developmental stage theories. In a study of 35 artists born between 1724 and 1900, Duncum (1984) found that as children all these artists learned through copying and were influenced by the art of their peers throughout their adult careers. In other words, various types of copying occur on local and professional levels, but it carries a negative connotation in school art contexts where positive values are

placed on competition and individualism.

In the child-centered classroom, students quickly learn not to copy, and they learn to be individually responsible for their own work. Children appear to learn on a tacit level what techniques and subjects are appropriate in school art. They also seem to be able to move from the expectations of the school context to the nonschool context and vice versa, without confusing the two (Wilson, 1974; Wilson & Wilson, 1977).

Unable to find major collections of child art predating the last century, Wilson (1985) has located children's drawings in the margins of old textbooks, diaries, and journals. He discerned both distinctive characteristics of spontaneous child art as well as changes overtime that can be best described as stylistic changes, such as we have assumed only occurred in adult art. Likewise, graffiti art, which occurs both outside the school art context and the sanctions of professional art institutions, shows strong stylistic changes and styles particular to individual youthful artists.

Nonschool, local art expressions can be considered merely inappropriate to school art contexts, or they can be seen as distinctly anti-school and antithetical to the spirit of school art and to the school administration. Duncum's (1989) study of children's images of violence indicates that teachers are often uncomfortable with such depictions and consider them to be pathological in nature. In local contexts, children produce art that is personal, autobiographical, and fanciful--and socially irreverent. Their art is not necessarily created to be publicly displayed or publicly critiqued.

Context Distinctions and Inconsistencies

School art lessons are believed to be exemplars that will, in addition to being valuable in themselves, transfer to art appreciation for the layperson or art skills for the art professional. However, since school art not only differs from local art but also does not seem to provide a great deal of preparation for professional art study or appreciation of institutionally validated art, the question arises as to why school art has the above-discussed characteristics. Efland (1976) believes that a child-centered art curriculum serves a compensatory function within the total school system. Other school subjects are taught with prespecified outcomes that conform to the timetable of published textbooks and according to the dictates of exit testing. Within this scheme of educational regimentation, art in the school curriculum appears to be sensitive to individual potential and to freedom of expression, and it appears to be concrete and contextually rich with meaning. School art gives the patina of humanistic values. Art instruction has been treated as an educational public relations frill that offers visual niceties in the form of decorations for the principal's office and attractive bulletin boards--and, of course, art classes are supposed to provide students respite from "demanding" academic subjects (Efland, 1976). Although creativity and art have been equated in much of our thinking about art, it is a polite rendition of creativity that is allowed in the school art context. Controversial subject matter, experimental art, and innocuous, but messy, art do not

fit the requirements of the school context. The school art described by Efland (1976) has little or no counterpart in professional contexts or in the context of everyday and personal experiences of art. It is, however, supportive of the value system and institutional character of the school context and, as such, supports and perpetuates school culture values, attitudes, and behaviors.

Recently it has been proposed that art should be taught as a discipline that, in addition to studio production, encompasses art criticism, art history, and aesthetics (Greer, 1984). Through the support of national art professional organizations and the J. Paul Getty Trust (1985), discipline-based art education (DBAE) moves art instruction closer to, if not into, the core curriculum of the school. If traditional studio-based curriculum resulted in a specific school-art style, it might be anticipated that a discipline-based curriculum will be even more removed from local contexts, although transfer to professional contexts may be enhanced.

Feldman's model has found application in DBAE curriculum in that the novice or naive child in the disciplinary context is to move toward the ideal of professional (idiosyncratic) knowledge and behaviors (Clark & Zimmerman, 1978, 1986). Art study is justified on the basis that it differs from what can be learned about art outside the school setting, and children are not assumed to have significant art knowledge or experiences prior to entering the art classroom. Feldman's cultural context, i.e., local art context, is considered something to overcome. Art criticism instruction in the DBAE curriculum is structured so that

students will avoid personal associations, and they will reference their analysis to the perceptual qualities of the object (Hamblen, 1984). Likewise, aesthetic stage theory places a formalistic, decontextualized (low context) appreciation of art as the desirable outcome of development (Parsons, 1987). One might also note that such a developmental scheme is biased toward modernist interpretations of artistic meaning and response and against traditionalist, postmodern, and feminist interpretations. In other words, our models for appropriate or desirable art behaviors support the characteristics of the school art context and the larger mission of schools beyond the art classroom.

Rethinking Art Curriculum Content

Local art has most often appeared in school art under the rubric of "relevance." Relevance movements have been focused on using local art for purposes of motivation or as a concession to readiness levels, with the goal of moving students from initial local art experiences to an understanding and appreciation of school art and fine art (Lanier, 1970). Local, nonschool art experiences have not been considered as having merits in their own rights. Some of this, however, is changing. Proceeding from the rationales of critical theory, populist interpretations of art, educational pragmatism, and ethnographic studies of school and nonschool learning, a number of art educators have proposed various reasons and various ways for attending to the art of local, everyday experiences. Lanier (1970) has suggested that the

popular arts provide aesthetic experiences that are not inferior to those provided by fine art and that students entering the classroom already have significant art knowledge. Perr (1988) has published a curriculum of collaborative art lessons wherein students assume the many art roles necessary to complete projects that deal with community-based art. Both the collaborative projects themselves and the way in which work decisions are made proceed from the high context values of local art experiences. Perr's program differs from the numerous instances in which art forms from the local context are included in the school art curriculum, but without attention being paid to the value system of local experiences.

For art criticism instruction, Congdon (1986) has provided rationales for giving educational validity to local art speech and informal analyses of art. A review of statements made by children, laypersons, and folk artists indicates that highly complex art concepts are being discussed in local speech. Such naturalistic speech, however, has usually been dismissed as uneducated or inconsequential. As indicated earlier, children do produce nonschool art, but it is done with unsanctioned materials and techniques. After conducting research on differences between children's behaviors in school art and local art contexts, Wilson, Hurwitz, and Wilson (1987) published a program of art study that uses copying as the integrating and overarching concept for a series of drawing lessons.

I am suggesting that the local art context may provide clues to significant art learning and the experience of "real time" art tasks.

The specific skills used in local art production and response need to be identified, not merely for purposes of providing motivation and reinforcement of school art learning, but as valid in and of themselves. This would require a rethinking of curriculum art content. Art contexts and transfer among them need to be identified and researched in terms of attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Specifically, studies need to be done on adult attitudes toward art in terms of their K-12 art experiences. Disappointing results from the National Assessment in the Arts (Chapman, 1982) cannot be attributed only to weak art requirements inasmuch as test items reflect or relate to typical art lessons. It is highly possible that disappointing test results are also due school learning in art having negligible value. Despite having formal art instruction in their schooling, many adults in our society have a general apathy toward the arts and score low on art-related test items (Chapman, 1982).

Considering that art has a tenuous place in the school curriculum, there is a certain dangerous irony involved in suggesting that art curriculum content needs to be rethought in terms of local art. Such a proposal entails a major reconceptualization of both art curricula and what we have tended to consider valid art experiences. The irony of such a proposal is compounded by the fact that aspects of school art, even in its current state, are seen as worthy of emulation in educational reform. However, the perceived desirability of some art education practices are more a function of the problems in the rest of education than they are a function of art education successes. An

initial step in the direction of identifying local art knowledge and skill would be to allow art students to engage in a critical examination of the three art contexts identified in this paper. Current art education practices share with the rest of education a noncritical stance toward domain knowledge; curriculum content is usually presented to students in a taken-for-granted manner, with the implication that it has universal application. Opportunities need to be provided for students to experience local, school, and professional contexts for the purpose of examining the underlying value systems of these contexts and for the more pragmatic purpose of revealing how local art might be developed in the school curriculum.

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